AP® English Language and Composition

Welcome! AP English Language and Composition will consist of reading, writing, and analysis activities designed to prepare you for the AP exam in May as specified in the AP English Language Course Description, along with personal and study skills to prepare you for college. You have a full year of hard work ahead of you, but the effort will pay off. This course will be demanding (but fun), maddening (but interesting), challenging (but not impossible), and frustrating (but worth it).

Texts


AP English Language focuses on critical reading and analysis of nonfiction essays, editorials, and visual texts. Novels and plays may be included within a unit to provide additional perspective on how course themes are developed in fiction and drama.

Students are strongly encouraged to purchase a personal copy of Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style* for general writing reference.

Grades

Your work is your responsibility to complete, both accurately and on time. After school help is available if you need it, or you may call or email me with questions. I'm not Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, or the Tooth Fairy. I don't give out grades—you earn them.

Your grade will be calculated based on these kinds of assignments:

- **Major assignments**: final drafts, projects, quizzes, tests, presentations, synthesis essays, documented research essays
- **Classwork/homework**: first drafts, group work, peer reviews, discussions, self-reflective assessments, outside reading, reader's journals, bellwork
- **AP practice items**: multiple choice and free-response items, item review and analysis activities, practice exams

Progress reports will be distributed at regular intervals. You may check your grades anytime using the K12 Planet system. If you have a question or concern about your grade, please make an appointment to discuss it before or after school. **Do not ask me about your grade during class time.**

Grading Scale:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percent Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
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Portfolio

Each student will keep two portfolios. All graded work will be kept in a **working portfolio**. Selections from the working portfolio which illustrate your progress and achievement in class shall make up the **presentation portfolio**. A review of your presentation portfolio will be held during a formal conference with the instructor at the end of each semester, which will count as part of the semester exam grade.
COURSE OVERVIEW

The goal of AP Language and Composition is to provide a challenging, balanced course that helps develop analytical readers, thinkers, and writers. The course will be divided into four marking periods, each of which focuses on one theme. Course themes, texts, and research topics are explained in more detail following this overview.

AP Exam Practice

Periodic practice with AP exam items is designed to familiarize students with the examination content and construction and help students refine skills needed for success on both multiple-choice questions and free-response prompts. Multiple-choice item review and analysis will focus on reading and analyzing the passage, question construction, question vocabulary, and time management. Students will refine their responses to free-response items by using rubrics and scoring guides, focusing on crafting effective thesis statements, and selecting appropriate thesis support from the passage and outside sources. One AP-style synthesis question related to the theme will be answered and reviewed each marking period.

Texts

Students will engage with a variety of texts as active readers and thinkers. Textual analysis using strategies such as SOAPSTone and OPTIC and classroom discussions will help students determine rhetorical purposes, audience, and techniques of a text. Primary readings will be selected from appropriate chapters in *The Language of Composition*. Additional essays and visual texts will come from the secondary text and outside sources as appropriate, including daily newspapers, editorial cartoon collections, magazines, DVDs and videos, and alternate essay collections.

Reader’s Journals

Students will be expected to keep a reflective reader’s journal for the summer reading assignment. Additional readings related to the student’s chosen research theme will be included in the journal for review, analysis, and inclusion in the documented essay for each marking period. Daily bellwork assignments kept in the journal will require students to reflect/react informally to a variety of prompts (visuals, quotations, questions).

Research

Students will produce one formal documented essay during each marking period. The essay will present either an expository review or an argument proposing a particular course of action related to the theme for the marking period. (Suggested research topics are listed on the specific page for each marking period.) Students will be expected to review a variety of primary and secondary sources, including print and visual media, to complete their papers. Documented essay sources must be attributed using MLA documentation style.

Writing Process

Students will be expected to write for multiple purposes, such as a reaction to a bellwork prompt, a narrative response to a work of art, an explanation of a process, a refutation/support of an editorial position, or a formal presentation of a researched argument. Informal writing assignments may be used to prompt discussion or to apply skills in revision and proofreading. Formal writing assignments will undergo a series of drafts. Drafts will be refined using peer review, rubrics for content and for grammar/syntax, and conferencing. Reflective use of glossing and other revision techniques will help students produce cogent, organized writing that showcases student style as well as a firm grasp of appropriate tone, diction, detailed support, and complex syntactical structure.

Vocabulary Study

The goal of vocabulary study is to improve students’ working vocabulary. Increased vocabulary assists with identification of rhetorical aims and improves student diction in their own writing. Specific rhetorical vocabulary will be highlighted, with additional words for study taken from assigned readings. Students will be expected to work with these words and their variants and apply them in a range of contexts, from formal assessments to classroom writing assignments to application on AP practice items.
Media-driven culture demands clear language. Yet politically correct language and doublespeak crowd the airways. Censorship battles hamper clear communication. Common usage adds new words to the lexicon and banishes old slang terms so quickly we can’t always keep up. From spin doctors to the word police, this marking period provides an introduction to rhetorical terms and explores how the language we use doesn’t always reveal clearly what we mean—or does it?

Primary Text Sources:
Chapter 4, Education
Chapter 9, Language
Chapter 11, Popular Culture (Conversation: Focus on Television)

Supplemental Texts:
Baldwin, James. “If Black English Isn’t a Language, Then Tell Me, What Is?”
Bradbury, Ray. Fahrenheit 451 (summer reading)
Dunn, Mark. Ella Minnow Pea (summer reading)
Ericsson, Stephanie. “The Ways We Lie”
Miller, Arthur. The Crucible (summer reading)
Tannen, Deborah. “But What Do You Mean?”

Visual Texts:
(courthouse scenes, “Sign your name…”)
Dixie Chicks, “Goodbye, Earl” (video)
Dixie Chicks, “Not Ready to Make Nice” (video)
(“Hey, Vanilla Ice…”)

Research Topics for Documented Essay:
Bilingual education
English-only movement
Media influence
Politically Correct language

AP Synthesis Question:
Television’s Influence on Elections
Identity is inextricably bound with gender, especially in an environment where roles, jobs, pursuits, and interests are so neatly codified into "male" and "female." What part does language—especially visual messages in advertisements, music videos, and the marketplace—have in shaping our views of men and women?

**Primary Text Sources:**
Chapter 5, Work (Conversation: Focus on Working Parents)
Chapter 7, Gender
Chapter 8, Sports and Fitness (Conversation: Focus on Body Image)
Chapter 10, Sciences and Technology ("More Couples Screening Embryos for Gender")

**Supplemental Texts:**
The Beach Boys, “When I Grow Up to Be a Man”
Brady, Judy. “I Want a Wife”
Brott, Armin. “Not All Men are Sly Foxes”
Gaines, Ernest J. *A Lesson Before Dying*
Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
Kincaid, Jamaica. “Girl”
Kingston, Maxine Hong. “No Name Woman”
Truth, Sojourner. “Ain’t I a Woman?”
Vowell, Sarah. “Shooting Dad”

**Visual Texts:**
(Vikki gets coffee)
Tim McGraw, “Grown Men Don’t Cry” (video)
Kanye West, “Golddigger” (video)

**Research Topics for Documented Essay:**
Gender stereotyping (toys, advertisements, music videos)
Medical equity
Title IX
Workplace equity

**AP Synthesis Question:**
Hip-Hop and Gender Stereotypes
Young, gifted, and Black. Or Hispanic. Or Asian. Or White. Racial identity provides both an immediate means of identification in the American society and an immediate means for ostracism. The politics of race make language and writing about race a particularly difficult task. This language, however, represents our best hope of taking down racial barriers for good.

Primary Text Sources:
Chapter 4, Education (Conversation: Focus on the American High School)
Chapter 8, Sports and Fitness

Supplemental Texts:
Alexie, Sherman, “Indian Education”
Baldwin, James. The Fire Next Time
Faulkner, William. Light in August
Greenberg, Jeff, “The Black and White Truth About Basketball”
King, Jr., Dr. Martin Luther, “Letter from Birmingham Jail”
Leong, Christine. “Being a Chink”
Staples, Brent, “Black Men and Public Space”
Twain, Mark. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
West, Cornel, “Race Matters”

Visual Texts:
Boondocks. Aaron McGruder. (comic)

Research Topics for Documented Essay:
Affirmative action programs
Civil rights
School integration
Racial profiling

AP Synthesis Question:
Bill Cosby’s NAACP Remarks and African-American Identity
The American Dream represents everything from a house with a white picket fence to a steady job. Invariably, who we are as Americans is tied up in questions of money, property, and civic power. This marking period will explore writers’ reactions to questions of money, power, community, and belonging.

**Primary Text Sources:**
Chapter 6, Community
Chapter 11, Popular Culture
Chapter 12, Nature
Chapter 13, Politics

**Supplemental Texts:**
Ascher, Barbara Lazear. “On Compassion”
Ehrenreich, Barbara. “Serving in Florida”
Gardner, Marilyn. “More Working Parents Play Beat the Clock”
Hansberry, Lorraine. *A Raisin in the Sun*
Quindlen, Anna. “Homeless”
Reich, Robert. “Why the Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Poorer”
Schlosser, Eric. “Protecting Youth” from *Fast Food Nation*
Wilson, August. *Fences*

**Visual Texts:**
Green Day, “When September Ends” (video)

**Research Topics for Documented Essay:**
Housing and homelessness
Immigration
Minimum wage
Public assistance programs

**AP Synthesis Question:**
Invasive Species